FEAR FLIES WITH AVIATORS

SUDDEN PANICS APT TO MARK TRIPS TO CLOUDLAND.

Loneliness and Alarms of Altitude Flights —Panic Caused by a Flapping String —Fascination of the Aeroplane—The Sensations of a Trip in a Balloon.

BY J. ARMSTRONG DREXEL.

Few aviators will admit that they have any fear in flying. Yet I venture to assert that there isn't a man using an aeroplane to-day who does not feel a sinking sensation either just before he mounts his seat or shortly afterward, or many times after he gets well into the air. They will not admit it to any one, because they try not to admit it to themselves; but the fear is there constantly and it often comes to the surface in spite of everything that the aviator can do to repress it or to crowd it out by thinking of something else.

I know men who stoutly declare that they have never yet felt the slightest nervousness when flying, but I am frank in saying that I do not believe them. Not that they deliberately misstate the case but rather that they deceive themselves and convince themselves that they are without fear.

There is really no reason to deny this fear so far as I can see. We are all of us taking grim, long chances, and we know it. We are going into an element that was never made for us to travel, and we are fighting the strongest forces in nature, fighting them with a flimsy machine, only half developed, made of materials that are still in the experimental stage, and depending for our support upon a form of power plant that is so little perfected that it cannot be depended on even when installed under ideal conditions and attended by experts. Why shouldn't we find ourselves seized by fear sometimes? And why shouldn't a man admit it?

The late Ralph Johnstone exhibited less fear than any man I have ever known, yet he admitted to me that he frequently found himself on the verge of panic while performing some of his most dangerous evolutions. He, however, kept absolute control of himself and he never allowed this feeling the upper hand. He unconsciously illustrated this power of control when shortly before his unfortunate end he told me one day of a plan he had of turning a back somersault in the air.

"I want to get up about five thousand feet," he said, drawing a diagram on a piece of paper. "Then I will begin the somersault. The machine will go backward a certain distance until it loses the support of the air. Then it will drop straight down for about three thousand feet. During that drop I shall manipulate my levers so that they will bring her right side up again and I will glide to the ground."

Johnstone was perfectly serious about it. He admitted that he was afraid of it, but he was determined that he would do it.

Capt. Thomas S. Baldwin is probably as seasoned a veteran of air perils as is alive to-day. For many years he went about the world ballooning and parachute jumping and then he took to the aeroplane. No one in watching him would think that he knew the meaning of the word fear. Yet a friend of mine once asked him if he ever felt nervous and he replied:

"Scared to death every time I take my seat. Some days my mechanics have to shove me on the machine. Then when I get her started I am all right and the fear vanishes. But I am a baby until I hear the motor going."

I believe too that each of us has his own peculiar form of fear in flying. Some men feel their greatest fear at the thought of the engine stopping suddenly and without warning.

I have never been troubled by this, though I have had it happen to me several times. Each time I managed to get down safely, and I have always felt that there was a good chance in favor of the aviator if he keeps his head and takes as gradual a slant downward as is needed to give him control of his machine. But from my novice days I have seemed to have the knack of gliding right and it has never worried me much.

I know several men who have never got over their nervousness at the thought of volplaning, as they term coasting down without power. They know how to do it and do actually perform it successfully when they have found it necessary, but it has a constant terror for them, and the slightest sound in the engine that hints of trouble puts them in the same panic that the thought of the tail of my aeroplane puts me in when I am out for altitude records.

With such work as altitude flying, of which I have made a specialty, there is all too much time for the nerves to get on edge, and unfortunately the higher a man climbs under the increasingly difficult conditions the more the strain begins to tell on the nerves, and it is only by a sharp pulling together of all the aviator's self-control and will power that he is saved at times from complete and fatal panic.

As a man mounts higher and higher into the air the familiar objects of earth fade from his sight and he begins to miss them, for they were something that belonged to him and to his world and they kept his mind occupied. Now, however, he becomes overpowered with a sense of being absolutely alone, of being cast adrift and dependent entirely upon his own resources and upon a power plant which he knows may fail him at any moment.

Up and up he climbs, and soon he enters the region of the clouds. Here the sense of loneliness becomes intensified with a feeling of the utter emptiness of everything; he sees nothing above him, below him, on either side of him. He seems to be whizzing through an immense void with neither sides nor top nor bottom, and the unreality of it all and the immensity of it impress him and the nerves begin their unpleasant little tremors that tell of approaching fear.

Then above the clouds he bursts into the glaring, brilliant sunlight and the warmth that seems hot after the coolness of the haze, and here again he meets conditions that increase the nerve tremors.

Sudden gusts of wind catch him. They are quick and dangerous just above the clouds on a sunshiny day and they give no warning of their approach, so it means every faculty on edge to prepare for all kinds of contingencies, and the strain begins to tell. It has not yet perhaps grown to the proportions of absolute fear, but one can feel it coming, and one knows too that the most trifling loss of self-control or mental balance will mean the immediate toppling over of the entire nervous structure. So one grits one's teeth and sits tighter and looks to the whirling propeller or the aneroid barometer or anything to take one's mind off the loneliness and the vastness and his own impudence in coming up so high into a region in which he has no rights.

Up near the top of the climb is where the fear begins to get you. You may have managed to master yourself until then, but the tension has been increasing cumulatively, and when the last few mad minutes of plunging and rising begin fear seems to laugh at you for trying to keep it away.

Now the nerves are gone. They jump and strain and you fancy you hear and see things, and then your fears concentrate on a noise behind you and suddenly you realize that you are gone, the tail has come loose! It is rattling on its broken wires now and at the next plunge it will be wrenched off completely and leave you helpless in the one awful straight drop down to the earth that is lurking under the clouds thousands of feet below you.

You look around in sudden panic, knowing that it will do no good, yet instinctively searching to see if there is anything possible you can do to save yourself. You can't look long, so you take a quick glance over your shoulder, and find the tail in first class shape, holding the machine to her work and looking strong enough to balance a machine with two men of your size.

Completely reassurred, you turn again to your climbing. Your nerves are shaken by this moment of panic, but you make up your mind that it shall not occur again, and you grit your teeth and shove her nose upward once more.

And then suddenly it begins all over again. You hear that horrible rattle in the tail; this time there can be no mistake. The tail has come loose and you are about to plunge down to destruction. Again you look around in panic, and again you find all safe and sound.

The effect of such constantly recurring panics can easily be imagined. Only a few minutes of such strain are needed to shatter the strongest nerves, and once the nerves are gone a man imagines all sorts of silly but terribly real things, and the agony becomes intense.

In reality, though it would not seem so from the telling, this and other sorts of fear that come to one while he is aloft are usually so quick that they pass in a flash and the danger is over almost before the aviator can realize it. It keeps him busy; every nerve and every faculty is worked to its utmost to overcome the danger and there is only a lightninglike passing sensation of horror.

He does not really have time to know how scared he is until he comes down to earth, and then he lives that awful moment a thousand times in his waking and sleeping moments afterward. So it happens that fear most frequently comes to the airman after he has reached the ground and has time to think of what he has gone through several thousand feet up in the air.

But once in a while we do get caught under circumstances that make flying a long continued torture, and one of these times that I shall never forget occurred to me during the meet at Lanark, Scotland, a day or two before I made the world's altitude record.

I had started up without any purpose other than of giving an exhibition flight. As everything was working beautifully and my motor was singing that regular humming song that gives the aviator such a sense of security and power, I rose gradually in big circles and was, I should say, 2,500 or 3,000 feet high when I suddenly heard above the sound of the engine an unusual and most disagreeable flapping sound at my left.

Glancing along the front of the plane on that side, I was horrified to see that something was loose and was being torn this way and that by the pressure of the air, through which I was going at a rate of about 60 miles an hour. This flapping something vibrated far too fast for me to see clearly what it was, but as I tried to cast about in my mind what the possibilities were I was suddenly overwhelmed with the stupefying realization that the only thing it could be was a piece of the fabric with which the framework of the rib was covered and which gives the supporting surface of an aeroplane.

To the layman the import of such a realization cannot be understood in its full force. Briefly, it meant that the cloth which alone held me in the air had begun to rip on that side, and I knew that at the tremendous speed at which I was going it would take only one good grip of the wind under such a small opening to tear the entire fabric from front to rear, whip it off the frame and leave me absolutely unsupported on that side, to go crashing below, helpless to avert the disaster and certain of meeting the inevitable end that since has overtaken other aviators from much the same cause.

All this flashed across my mind in an instant, but there came with it the certain instinct not to let panic get the better of me and to keep perfectly calm to the bitter end so as to take advantage of any chances that might offer themselves.

I was too high for a quick descent and my machine's tail was toward the aviation field at the time I made the discovery. There were no good landing places ahead so far as I could see in the hurried glance I took of the earth beneath me, so I made up my mind to turn about and try to get back to the aviation field.

I came down in as easy curves as I could, because I did not want to put any extra strain on the torn fabric, knowing full well that a slight rip of that kind is very easily torn apart. As I came lower and lower I kept my eye glued on that vibrating piece of cloth, fascinated, held spellbound by the problem of whether it would continue to vibrate without tearing until I got down another hundred feet or so to comparative safety, or whether it was merely waiting until the last moment to give a final shrieking rip as though in a fiendish desire to tantalize me with false hope as long as possible.

I know that cold sweat stood out all over my body, and it was only by instinct that I worked the controls of my machine, for my entire mind was focussed on that little flapping shred and all my thoughts revolved about that one question of whether it would hold long enough to let me get a little closer and have a chance for safety in the fall if the rip did come.

As I looked back on it I believe I never even noticed the jolting of the wheels when at last I touched the ground. Dumbly and by instinct again I had shut off the power on landing, bringing the machine to a full stop.

I sat in my seat as my mechanics came running up, and with my eyes still glued fascinated to the spot where I had seen the flapping cloth I waited for them. The shred had dropped forward and underneath the plane now that the pressure of the wind had ceased, and when one of my men came near I shouted to him to go over there and see what was hanging to the plane. He walked over and looked up and said:

"I do not see anything."

"Isn't there a shred of the cloth hanging there?" I asked.

He ducked under the plane and soon came up holding in his hand a little piece of string four or five inches long.

"It wasn't a piece of cloth," he said. "It was just a bit of string that got caught in a bolt here."

Do not get the idea from what I have said that an aviator is more or less constantly engaged in fighting fear when he is in flight. As a rule a man in an aeroplane is far too busy to think much of fear, especially when he is taking part in some meet; his mind is too fully occupied to allow room for any sensation except the exhilaration that comes with any form of sharp competition.

In almost all public exhibitions there is a regular programme to be followed out. This requires certain events each day and these events are governed by certain rules. There are pylons, or turning posts, to be rounded, grand stands and enclosures to be avoided, outlines of ships to drop bombs upon, circles and squares to land in for accuracy and all such details that keep a man's mind fully occupied.

The earth is near and flashes by at the rate of a mile a minute and more than likely there are other machines in the air at the same time and the rules of the road must be followed or there will be disqualification if not total smashup. So the aviator is too fully occupied in guiding his machine according to the rules to think much about the danger he is in, yet oddly enough it is in this very competitive form of flying that he is in most peril.

In working by himself he is least in danger, yet he is likely to be more in fear, for he has more time to think of his peril and not so much to occupy his mind and so quiet his nerves. Thus it is that in altitude flying, as I have said, there is too much time for silly fears to rise up and torment the lone figure fighting up, up, up thousands of feet above his fellow creatures, after a bubble that we call a record.

Before I had gone very far in aeroplaning I had an experience in the air which illustrates the point that the many things a man has to do while flying and think about for safety's sake as a rule operate to keep his mind away from fear.

I had been well up in my Blériot several times and had felt very little nervousness, when a friend in England invited me to accompany him and a party of guests on a balloon trip. I gladly assented, because I wanted to experience some of the calm joys that I had heard made the use of the aerostat so delightful.

We started on an ideal day. The balloon was inflated, the basket attached, we mounted, balanced and were cast off, all without the slightest hitch. As the ground sank away beneath me I tried to feel some of the thrills that I had felt in my good Blériot. But they did not come.

There was no merry humming of the motor, no stinging rush of the wind, no sense of great power overcoming nature, nothing to do to bring the personal equation into play and to give me the idea that I was doing some of the work and that skill and ocurage were necessary to success.

I looked over the side of the basket at the little earth away below. I looked at my friends, but they were paying no attention to me. There was not a breath of air, not the slightest hint of motion or power; we were merely drifting and to me, used to the defiant bark of my motor and the shriek of the futile wind, it seemed that we were only hung suspended by a tiny thread and that all of us were on edge, waiting for the thread to snap and the whole outfit to go crashing below to the far distant earth and to destruction.

I could not get out of my mind this sense of suspended fate, of helpless waiting for something awful to happen. I had never experienced it in my Blériot. There all was action; muscles, mind, nerves were constantly occupied with the glorious battle with gravitation and every moment carried its exhilarating impression of personal triumph and inspiring victory.

So we drifted upward and onward, inert, silent, helpless. I found myself looking at the ropes that suspended the car; they were all too thin and weak, it seemed to me, for the weight of such a party. I glanced up at the toggles where the car ropes joined the concentrating ring. Certainly it would take but little to snap off these toothpick little pieces of wood.

I looked at the concentrating ring itself; it seemed a flimsy affair to hold the lives of so many of us. And then, up to the netting over the bag my eyes wandered; a meagre little knotting together of rotten looking strings which I thought I could snap with my fingers as a grocery man snaps the twine after he has wrapped a bundle.

I felt my nerves going fast. I wanted to do something to prevent the impending calamity. It seemed foolhardy to stand there calmly with the air of a cheerful martyr while we waited for the most horrible of deaths. I felt the need of fighting something, of working levers, of directing the thing, of doing something or other that would give me a chance; but we drifted calmly and I heard one of my companions say something about the altogether lovely time we were having and what a perfect and inspiring form of recreation ballooning was.

I looked at the others of the party to see if they realized our danger as I did, but to my amazement I saw that they had opened a hamper and were passing about the sandwiches and champagne. At first this seemed to me like useless bravado, but a glass of champagne enabled me to pull myself together somewhat, and I reasoned that my companions were all veteran balloonists and that if there were the slightest grounds for fear they would be doing something to avert calamity instead of calmly preparing and eating luncheon.

This allayed my panic for the moment, but it returned again and again until I was in a cold sweat and my knees actually trembled. I knew it was silly, yet I could not help it. I was in a complete flunk. The awful stillness, the oppressive calm, the sense of nothing to do and nothing to be done, all so different from the inspiriting struggle in a fighting aeroplane, increased my panic every minute, and I was never before, nor have I ever since been so glad of getting back to mother earth as I was when we landed lightly as a feather, deflated and stepped from the basket.

To my companions it was an altogether delightful trip, without an incident to mar their complete enjoyment and with all conditions ideal; to me it was hours and months of torture, for long after it was over I found myself waking in the night with that dreadful fear impending of inevitable disaster that even to this day has not left me.

But I have determined to conquer this fear. I plan to go into ballooning until I get a pilot's license, and if all goes well I hope to handle one of the balloons of the Aero Club of Pennsylvania in the next elimination contests for the Gordon Bennett race. I am convinced that when one becomes used to the sensation it can be the most delightful of sports and I know that it is safer than almost any other form of recreation.

THIS BOY A SCULPTOR AT 13

AVARD FAIRBANKS MODELLING ANIMALS AT THE ZOO.

One of His Groups Attracted Attention From the Academy of Design, Though Not Accepted—Brought Up in Salt Lake City and Discovered in New York.

One of the most noticed of the groups submitted to the National Academy of Design for its exhibition this spring was the work of Avard Fairbanks, a thirteen-year-old boy. While the group was not accepted it caused much comment on account of the ability it showed.

Avard Fairbanks, who lives at 200 West Eighty-first street, is the son of John Fairbanks, a Western artist who studied under Benjamin Constant, Jules Le Fevre and John Paul Laurens.

"The boy never attended any art school until the scholarship at the Art League was given him," said his father when asked about Avard's training. "Last summer his brother, who is director of drawing in the schools in Salt Lake City, had a class, and the boy used to come in and look around rather wistfully.

"One day he said: 'I can do better work than that.' His brother told him to take a little rabbit he had and use it for a model. He made quite a success of it and afterward enlarged it and exhibited it at the agricultural fair at Salt Lake City."

The boy has been in New York seven months. He has spent much of his time at the Metropolitan Museum, where he made a copy of Barye's "Lion and Snake." It was while he was working there that Mrs. Prescott D. Heard discovered him and took him to the well known sculptors, Messrs. Borglum, Fraser and Potter. Subsequently a scholarship in the evening sculpture class at the Art League under James P. Fraser was obtained for him. He works every day from 9 to 4 at the zoological park in the Bronx.

"It is mostly memory work," he said, looking straight out of his big gray eyes. "This," pointing to the crouching panther. "I got when they were feeding, this pose when they were walking. I watch them closely and see how the muscles look and then I remember to work. Sometimes I am off in a little room by myself with a lion or puma in a cage.

"There wasn't any zoo in Salt Lake," he explained when asked if he had any great fondness for animals, "but I always had pets."

He does his work very quickly. The group "Fighting Panthers" was done in two days, and he has done as many as three figures in one week.

FIGHTING PANTHERS.

AVARD FAIRBANKS.

STUDY OF A PANTHER.

STUDY OF A PANTHER.

"He has a great deal of talent," said Mr. Fraser. "He came to my class and when I realized how much talent he had I sent him to Proctor, and he told him the best thing was to go right up to the zoo and work there. He was very fortunate in having a father who is also an artist."

The boy has tried painting as well as sculpture. One picture showed an interior with a kettle over the fire. Another was a meadow and haystack.

"His mother used to mould the butter into animals," said Mr. Fairbanks, "and I suppose he gets his talent from her, too. He has always wanted to be an artist."

Memorials of Gen. Wolfe.

From the London Globe.

The war relics given by Lady Scoresby Johnstone to the Edinburgh Municipal Museum have reached their new home. They consist of two field pieces which were used at the siege of Quebec under Gen. Wolfe and two old mortars. The gun carriages are old and worm eaten. A brass plate testifies that "this gun mortar was used by Gen. Wolfe at the siege of Quebec in 1759."

COLUMBIA'S MUSICAL SHOW.

"Made in India" the Most Elaborate Production Yet Staged by the Students.

Professors are lecturing to empty chairs in the classrooms at Columbia these days, for the undergraduate students are devoting their attention to the annual varsity show, "Made in India," which is to be presented in the grand ballroom of the Hotel Astor beginning on the evening of Monday, March 20. Between now and then there will be rehearsals night and day, with a preliminary performance in the Brooklyn Academy of Music on Friday night thrown in. With everything shipshape the show will open in the Astor on March 20 and will continue until Saturday, when in addition to the regular evening performance there will be a matinée.

Emil Breitenfeld, a senior in the law school, is the author of the show, which is a two act musical comedy. The book and most of the lyrics are his, although a few were written by the late Theodore Roosevelt Murray. Breitenfeld also looked after the orchestration of the piece, which is produced under the direction of Frank Stammers. Richard G. Conried, a son of the late director of the Metropolitan Opera House and a Columbia graduate, is helping Stammers with the music.

Ever since Christmas the students have been practising under the eyes of Stammers and half a dozen of the graduates who have been through the mill. Never before have they attempted so elaborate a piece as "Made in India," which is to have a cast of fourteen and a chorus of nearly 100. There will be troupes of Circassian dancing girls, squads of British soldiers and Indian coolies by the score. Morris Kinney, '12, who led the French ballet in last year's show, will be the leading dancer. For several weeks the students who have drawn girls' parts have been practising walking a dozen feet without tripping over their newly acquired skirts.

The proceeds of the show will be divided between the university athletic teams and charity. The performance on Tuesday, March 21, will be for the benefit of the Stony Wold Sanatorium, and on the following evening the house will be sold for the Bide-a-Wee Home Association. The other performances will contribute directly to the university teams.

Following the regular production of the piece in New York it will be presented in Washington at the New Willard Hotel on Monday, April 17, and it is probable that it will have another road performance at either Harrisburg or Atlantic City.

The story of the show has to do with the adventures of *Charles P. Smith*, an author of musical comedies, who goes to India with his comedian, *Montrose Finnegan*, his leading lady and his musical director, to whom he dictates his music as it comes to him. At the same time a *Charles K. Smith*, the agent for an American moving picture concern, arrives in India with the purpose of getting some films of an Indian revolution. He hires an ex-car conductor, who is posing as a rajah, to help him, and the car conductor arranges a revolution.

The other *Smith* learns of the plan and sees a chance to get some good material for his newest comedy and hides himself in a commanding position. The sudden and unexpected arrival of the real rajah puts an abrupt end to the revolution, and the ensuing complications end as is usual in the land of musical comedy.

The cast is as follows:

The Rajah of Rajahpur	A. J. Brock, '13
The Rajahine	W. D. Spalthoff, '13
Charles K. Smith	R. Hale, '14
Charles P. Smith	R. B. Boyd, PG
Lord Throckmorton	H. A. Geiger, '12S
Mrs. Ormsby	H. H. Jessup, '13
Ethel May	A. E. Peterson, '14
Pinckney	A. J. Grimm, '11
Finnegan	J. T. Blaber, '13L
Gus	G. C. Rohrs, '14
Steve	O. C. Isbell, '12
Mazie	W. V. Saxe, '13
Cornelia	A. L. Graham, '13
Mulligan	R. S. Bonsib, '13S

CAST OF "MADE IN INDIA," THE COLUMBIA VARSITY SHOW. LEFT TO RIGHT—TOP ROW—W. O'BRIEN, '11; R. S. BONSIB, '13; H. P. CORSA, '11 (MANAGER); H. A. GEIGER, '12S; H. H. JESSUP, '13; A. J. GRIMM, '11; C. LORDLY, '12; G. C. ROHRS, '14, AND A. J. GRAHAM, '14. SITTING—W. D. SPALTHOFF, '13; A. J. BROCK, '13; A. H. PETERSON, '14; W. V. SAXE, '13; R. HALE, '14, AND O. C. ISBELL, '12. BOTTOM ROW—R. B. BOYD, PG.; J. T. BLABER, '13L, AND M. KINNEY, '12.